

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

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### Responses

#### 1. Economic Recovery and Growth

*Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?*

I think that it is necessary to tax corporations and to especially eliminate tax breaks for corporations that have negative effects on the country. Corporations that are environmentally destructive, that hurt aboriginal communities, that have poor labour standards, or that do not provide sustainable employment do not have a positive impact on Canadians and should not be given special status.

#### 2. Job Creation

*As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?*

I think that sustainable jobs and sustainable businesses should be prioritized, as well as accessible education (an diverse, educated work force is the best thing for Canada). And I don't just mean sustainability in the form of greenwashing, I mean that business needs to be both environmentally and socially sustainable, and that a business must value ethics, the community within which it works, its employees and the future of the world in which it works - businesses cannot continue to cause the economy to break down and expect to profit.

#### 3. Demographic Change

*What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?*

Making education as accessible as possible (ie. free post secondary education and support for students) is an important step - not only is our workforce ageing but other demographics are changing as well. We cannot continue to allow only students with privilege continue on to post secondary education. In addition, the way that we conceive of the university and education as a whole needs to change - education is not a business but it is becoming that way. Think of the way that the educational system has developed (as a way for the rich and powerful to ensure that their children will continue to be rich and powerful). Education has always been exclusive and the way that we conceive of it needs to change. The ageing workforce was able to attend university at a much lower cost and was able to find a job with much more ease - this needs to be acknowledged for any change to come about!

#### 4. Productivity

*With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?*

Honestly, I'm struggling to find an UNPAID internship. But, in the greater scheme of things, an ageing workforce is still a skilled workforce and a very knowledgeable workforce, although can also be 'old fashioned' ie. racist, sexist, oppressive. Education, and alternative education, is particularly important as

we grow older and need to continue to learn, although we aren't often given opportunities.

## **5. Other Challenges**

*With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?*

One example of a sustainable, community business is Santropol in Montreal. Santropol is a cafe that imports fair trade organic coffee which is sold in grocery stores across the city and served in other cafes, they run a meals on wheels program, they run a bike co op, and community gardens. Not only is it a business that employs people, it is a fixture of the community and provides valuable services and this should be valued. Giving small businesses, or even individuals, the opportunity to do things like put solar panels on their roofs, build gardens and do sustainable things that better their community should be a priority. Supporting resources to farmers should be a priority. Giving tax breaks to corporations that will annex our natural resources in exchange for short term employment is NOT a priority and should be avoided at all costs. Plan nord is not a good idea. The tar sands are not a good idea. They may give some people good jobs for 20 years, but what will happen to those communities when the resources run dry? We will have sold our water, trees, and ruined land for a quick buck, that mostly goes to foreign CEOs.